

HISTORIA HISTRIONICA:

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A N

Historical Account

O F T H E

English = Stage .

S H E W I N G

The ancient Use, Improvement,  
and Perfection, of Dramatick Repre-  
sentations, in this Nation.

I N A

Dialogue, of *PLAYS* and *PLAYERS*.

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— *Olim meminisse juvabit.*

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L O N D O N.

Printed by G. Croom, for William Haws at the  
Rose in Ludgate-street. 1699.

ALISTORIA HISTORICA

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

1848

in the position

# History of Plays and Players.

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Printed by J. G. ... for William ... at the ...  
London: J. G. ... 1899.

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# THE PREFACE.

**M**uch has been Writ of late pro and con, about the Stage, yet the Subject admits of more, and that which has not been hetherto toucht upon; not only what that is, but what it was, about which some People have made such a Busle. What it is we see, and I think it has been sufficiently display'd in Mr. Colier's Book; What it was in former Ages, and how used in this Kingdom, so far back as one may collect any Memorials, is the Subject of the following

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## The PREFACE.

ing Dialogue. Old Plays will be always Read by the Curious, if it were only to discover the Manners and Behaviour of several Ages; and how they alter'd. For Plays are exactly like Portraits Drawn in the Garb and Fashion of the time when Painted. You see one Habit in the time of King Charles I. another quite different from that, both for Men and Women, in Queen Elizabeths time; another; under Henry the Eighth different from both; and so backward all various. And in the several Fashions of Behaviour and Conversation, there is as much Mutability as in that of Cloaths. Religion and Religious matters was once as much the Mode in publick Entertainments, as the Contrary has been

in



## THE PREFACE.

in some times since. This appears in the different Plays of several Ages: And to evince this, the following Sheets are an Essay or Specimen.

Some may think the Subject of this Discourse trivial, and the persons herein mention'd not worth remembering. But besides that I could name some things contested of late with great heat, of as little, or less Consequence, the Reader may know that the Profession of Players is not so totally scandalous, nor all of them so reprobate, but that there has been found under that Name, a Canonized Saint in the primitive Church; as may be seen in the Roman Martyrology on the 29th of March; his name Masculas a Master of Interludes, (the Latin is Archimimus, and

## THE PREFACE.

*and the French Translation un Maître Comedien) who under the Persecution of the Vandals in Africa, by Geisericus the Arian King, having endured many and greivious Torments and Reproaches for the Confession of the Truth, finisht the Course of this glorious Combat. Saith the said Martyrology.*

*It appears from this, and some further Instances in the following Discourse, That there have been Players of worthy Principles as to Religion, Loyalty, and other Virtues; and if the major part of them fall under a different Character, it is the general unhappiness of Mankind, that the Most are the Worst.*

# DIALOGUE

## PLAYS and PLAYERS.

*Lovewit, Trum.*

**L** *Owen.* Honest Old Cavalier! well met,  
'faith I'm glad to see thee.

*Trum.* Have a care what you call me.  
Old, is a Word of Disgrace among the  
Ladies; to be Honest is to be Poor and Foolish,  
(as some think) and Cavalier is a Word as  
much out of Fashion as any of 'em.

*Lovew.* The more's the pity! But what said  
the Fortune-Teller in *Ben. Johnson's Mask of*  
*Gypsies*, to the then *Lord Privy Seal*,

*Honest and Old!*  
*In those the Good Part of a Fortune is sold.*

B

*Trum.*

*Tram.* Ben. Johnson? How dare you name Ben. Johnson in these times? When we have such a crowd of Poets of a quite different Genius; the least of which thinks himself as well able to correct Ben. Johnson, as he could a Country School Mistress that taught to Spell.

*Lovew.* We have indeed, Poets of a different Genius; so are the Plays: But in my Opinion, they are all of 'em (some few excepted) as much inferior to those of former Times, as the Actors now in being (generally speaking) are, compared to *Hart, Mohun, Burt, Lacy, Clan,* and *Shatterell*; for I can reach no farther backward.

*Tram.* I can; and dare assure you, if my Fancy and Memory are not partial (for Men of my Age are apt to be over indulgent to the thoughts of their youthful Days) I say the Actors that I have seen before the Wars, *Lowin, Tayler, Pollard,* and some others, were almost as far beyond *Hart* and his Company, as those were beyond these now in being.

*Lovew.* I am willing to believe it, but cannot readily; because I have been told, That those whom I mention'd, were Bred up under the tuition of your Acquaintance, and follow'd their manner of Action, which is now lost. So far, that when the Question has been askt, Why these Players do not receive the *Silent Woman*, and some other of *Johnson's* Plays; (once of highest esteem) they have answer'd, truly, Because there are none now Living who can  
rightly



rightly Humour those Parts, for all who related to the *Black-friers* (where they were Acted in perfection) are now Dead, and almost forgotten.

*Tram.* 'Tis very true, *Hart* and *Clun*, were bred up Boys at the *Blackfriers*; and Acted Womens Parts, *Hart* was *Robinson's* Boy or Apprentice: He Acted the Dutcheſs in the Tragedy of *the Cardinal*, which was the first Part that gave him Reputation. *Carmwright*, and *Wintershal* belong'd to the private House in *Salisbury-Court*, *Bart* was a Boy first under *Shank* at the *Black-friers*, then under *Beeſton* at the *Cockpit*; and *Mohun*, and *Shatteret* were in the same Condition with him, at the last Place. There *Burt* used to Play the principal Women's Parts, in particular *Clariana* in *Love's Cruelty*; and at the same time *Mohun* Acted *Bellamante*, which Part he retain'd after the Restauration.

*Lovew.* That I have ſeen, and can well remember. I wiſh they had Printed in the laſt Age (ſo I call the times before the Rebellion) the Actors Names over againſt the Parts they Acted, as they have done ſince the Reſtauration. And thus one might have gueſt at the Action of the Men, by the Parts which we now Read in the Old Plays.

*Tram.* It was not the Cuſtome and Uſage of thoſe Days, as it hath been ſince. Yet ſome few Old Plays there are that have the Names ſet againſt the Parts, as, *The Dutcheſs*



( 4 )  
the *Black-friers*; the *Picture*; the *Roman Altar*; the *de-  
scribing Picture*; the *Wild Goose Chase*, (at the  
*Black-friers*) the *Wedding*; the *Renegado*; the  
fair *Maid of the West*; *Hannibal and Scipio*;  
*King John and Matilda*; (at the *Cockpit*) and  
*Holland's Leaguer*, (at *Salisbury Court*.)

*Lowen*. These are but few indeed: But pray  
Sir, what *Master Parts* can you remember  
the *Old Black-friers Men to Act*, in *Johnson*,  
*Shakespear*, and *Fletcher's Plays*.

*Trum*. What I can at present recollect I'll  
tell you; *Shakespear*, (who as I have heard,  
was a much better Poet, than Player) *Barbadge*,  
*Hemmings*, and others of the *Older sort*, were  
Dead before I knew the *Town*; but in my  
time, before the Wars, *Lowin* used to Act,  
with mighty Applause, *Falstaffe*, *Morofo*, *Vul-  
pone*, and *Mammon* in the *Alchymist*; *Melan-  
sius* in the *Maid's Tragedy*, and at the same  
time *Amyntor* was Play'd by *Stephen Hammerton*,  
(who was at first a most noted and beautiful  
Woman Actor, but afterwards he acted with  
equal Grace and Applause, a Young Lo-  
ver's Part) *Taylor* Acted *Hamlet* incomparably  
well, *Jago*, *Truewit* in the *Silent Woman*, and  
*Face* in the *Alchymist*; *Smunston* used to Play  
*Othello*: *Pollard*, and *Robinson* were *Comedi-  
ans*, so was *Shank* who used to Act *Sir Roger*,  
in the *Stornful Lady*. These were of the *Black-  
friers*. Those of principal Note at the *Cockpit*,  
were, *Perkins*, *Michael Bowyer*, *Sumner*, *Wil-  
liam Allen*, and *Bird*, eminent Actors. and *Ro-  
bins*,

*blar* a Comedian. Of the other Companies I took little notice.

*Loew.* Were there so many Companies?

*Tram.* Before the Wars, there were in being all these Play-houses at the same time. The *Black-friers*, and *Globe* on the *Bankside*, a Winter and Summer House, belonging to the same Company called the King's Servants; the *Cock-pit* or *Phanix*, in *Drury-lane*, called the Queen's Servants; the private House in *Salisbury-court*, called the Prince's Servants; the *Fortune* near *White-cross-street*, and the *Red Bull* at the upper end of *St. John's-street*: The two last were mostly frequented by Citizens, and the meaner sort of People. All these Companies got Money, and Liv'd in Reputation, especially those of the *Blackfriers*, who were Men of grave and sober Behaviour.

*Loew.* Which I admire at; That the Town much less than at present; could then maintain Five Companies, and yet now Two can hardly Subsist.

*Tram.* Do not wonder, but consider, That tho' the Town was then, perhaps, not much more than half so Populous as now, yet then the Prices were small (there being no Scenes) and better order kept among the Company that came; which made very good People think a Play an Innocent Diversion for an idle Hour or two, the Plays themselves being then, for the most part, more Instructive and Moral. Whereas of late, the Play-houses are so extremely pestered

pestered with Vizard-masks and their Trade, (occasioning continual Quarrels and Abuses) that many of the more Civilized Part of the Town are uneasy in the Company, and shun the Theater as they would a House of Scandal. It is an Argument of the worth of the Plays and Actors, of the last Age, and easily inferr'd, that they were much beyond ours in this, to consider that they cou'd support themselves meerly from their own Merit; the weight of the Matter, and goodness of the Action, without Scenes and Machines: Whereas the present Plays with all that shew, can hardly draw an Audience, unless there be the additional Invitation of a *Signior Fideli*, a *Monsieur L'abbe*, or some such Foreign Regale express'd in the bottom of the Bill.

*Lovew.* To wave this Digression, I have Read of one *Edward Allin*, a Man so famed for excellent Action, that among *Ben. Johnson's* Epigrams, I find one directed to him, full of Encomium, and concluding thus

*Wear this Renown, 'tis just that who did give  
So many Poets Life, by one should Live.*

Was he one of the *Black-friers*?

*Trum.* Never, as I have heard; (for he was Dead before my time.) He was Master of a Company of his own, for whom he Built the *Fortune* Play-house from the Ground, a large, round Brick Building. This is he that grew so Rich

Rich that he purchased a great Estate in *Survey* and elsewhere; and having no Issue, he Built and largely endow'd *Dulwich* College, in the Year 1619, for a Master, a Warden, Four Fellows, Twelve aged poor People, and Twelve poor Boys, &c. A noble Charity.

*Lovew.* What kind of Playhouses had they before the Wars?

*Trum.* The *Black-friers*, *Cockpit*, and *Salisbury-court*, were called Private Houses, and were very small to what we see now. The *Cockpit* was standing since the Restoration, and *Rhode's* Company Acted there for some time.

*Lovew.* I have seen that.

*Trum.* Then you have seen the other two, in effect; for they were all three Built almost exactly alike, for Form and Bigness. Here they had Pits for the Gentry, and Acted by Candle-light. The *Globe*, *Fortune* and *Bull*, were large Houses, and lay partly open to the Weather, and there they alwaies Acted by Daylight.

*Lovew.* But prithee, *Truman*, what became of these Players when the Stage was put down, and the Rebellion raised?

*Trum.* Most of 'em, except *Lowin*, *Tayler* and *Pollard*, (who were superannuated) went into the King's Army, and like good Men and true, Serv'd their Old Master, tho' in a different, yet more honourable, Capacity. *Robinson* was Kill'd at the Taking of a Place (I think



think *Basing House*) by *Harrison*, he that was after Hang'd at *Charing-cross*, who refused him Quarter, and Shot him in the Head when he had laid down his Arms; abusing Scripture at the same time, in saying, *Cursed is he that doth the Work of the Lord negligently.* *Mohun* was a Captain, (and after the Wars were ended here, served in *Flanders*, where he received Pay as a Major) *Hart* was a Lieutenant of Horse under Sir *Thomas Dallison*, in *Prince Rupert's*, Regiment, *Burt* was Cornet in the same Troop, and *Shatterel* Quarter-master. *Allen* of the *Cockpit*, was a Major, and Quarter Master General at *Oxford*. I have not heard of one of these Players of any Note that sided with the other Party, but only *Swanston*, and he profess himself a Presbyterian, took up the Trade of a Jeweller, and liv'd in *Aldermanbury*, within the Territory of *Father Calamy*. The rest either Lost, or expos'd their Lives for their King. When the Wars were over, and the Royalists totally Subdued; most of 'em who were left alive gather'd to *London*, and for a Subsistence endeavour'd to revive their Old Trade, privately. They made up one Company out of all the Scatter'd Members of Several; and in the Winter before the King's Murder, 1648, They ventured to Act some Plays with as much caution and privacy as cou'd be, at the *Cockpit*. They continu'd undisturbed for three or four Days; but at last as they were presenting the Tragedy



gedy of the *Bloudy Brother*, (in which *Lowin* Acted *Aubrey*, *Taylor* *Rollo*, *Pollard* the Cook, *Burt* *Latorch*, and I think *Hart* *Otto*.) a Party of Foot Souldiers beset the House, surprized 'em about the middle of the Play, and carried 'em away in their habits, not admitting them to Shift, to *Hatton-house* then a Prison, where having detain'd them sometime, they Plunder'd them of their Cloths and let 'em loose again. Afterwards in *Oliver's* time, they used to Act privately, three or four Miles, or more, out of Town, now here, now there, sometimes in Noblemens Houses, in particular *Holland-house* at *Kensington*, where the Nobility and Gentry who met (but in no great Numbers) used to make a Sum for them, each giving a broad Peice, or the like. And *Alexander Gasse*, the Woman Actor at *Black-friers*, (who had made himself known to Persons of Quality) used to be the Jackal and give notice of Time and Place. At Christmas, and Bartlemew-fair, they used to Bribe the Officer who Commanded the Guard at *White-hall*, and were thereupon connived at to Act for a few Days, at the *Red Bull*; but were sometimes notwithstanding Disturb'd by Souldiers. Some pickt up a little Money by publishing the Copies of Plays never before Printed, but kept up in Manuscript. For instance, in the Year 1652, *Beaumont* and *Fletcher's* *Wild Goose Chase* was Printed in Folio, for the Publick use of all the Ingenious, (as the Title-

page Vays) and private Benefit of John Lowin and Joseph Tayler, Servants to his Late Majesty; and by them Dedicated To the Honour'd few Lovers of Dramatick Poetry: Wherein they modestly intimate their Wants. And that with sufficient Cause; for whatever they were before the Wars, they were, after, reduced to a necessitous Condition. Lowin in his latter Days, kept an Inn (the three Pidgeons) at Brentford, where he Dyed very Old, (for he was an Actor of eminent Note in the Reign of K. James the first) and his Poverty was as great as his Age. Tayler Dyed at Richmond and was there Buried. Pollard who Lived Single, and had a Competent Estate; Retired to some Relations he had in the Country, and there ended his Life. Perkins and Sumner of the Cockpit, kept House together at Clerkenwel, and were there Buried. These all Dyed some Years before the Restauration. What follow'd after, I need not tell you: You can easily Remember.

Lovent. Yes, presently after the Restauration, the King's Players Acted publicly at the Red Bull for some time, and then Removed to a New-built Playhouse in Vere-street by Claremarket. There they continued for a Year or two, and then removed to the Theater Royal in Drury-lane, where they first made use of Scenes, which had been a little before introduced upon the publick Stage by Sir William Davenant at the Duke's Old Theater in  
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*Lincoln-Inn-fields*, but afterwards very much improved, with the Addition of curious Machines by Mr. Betterton at the New Theater in *Dorset-Garden*, to the great Expence and continual Charge of the Players. This much impair'd their Profit o'er what it was before; for I have been inform'd, (by one of 'em) That for several Years next after the Restauration, every whole Sharer in Mr. *Hart's* Company, got 1000 *l. per an.* About the same time that Scenes first enter'd upon the Stage at *London*, Women were taught to Act their own Parts; since when, we have seen at both Houses several excellent Actresses, justly famed as well for Beauty, as perfect good Action. And some Plays (in particular *The Parson's Wedding*) have been Presented all by Women, as formerly all by Men. Thus it continued for about 20 Years, when Mr. *Hart* and some of the Old Men began to grow weary, and were minded to leave off; then the two Companies thought fit to Unite; but of late, you see, they have thought it no less fit to Divide again, though both Companies keep the same Name of his Majesty's Servants. All this while the Play-house Musick improved Yearly, and is now arrived to greater Perfection than ever I knew it. Yet for all these Advantages, the Reputation of the Stage, and Peoples Affection to it, are much Decay'd, Some were lately severe against it, and would hardly

hardly allow Stage-Plays fit to be longer permitted. Have you seen Mr. Collier's Book?

*True.* Yes, and his Opposer's.

*Love.* And what think you?

*True.* In my mind Mr. Collier's Reflections are Pertinent, and True, in the Main; the Book ingeniously Writ, and well Intended: But he has overshot himself in some Places; and his Respondents, perhaps, in more. My affection inclines me not to Engage on either side, but rather Mediate. If there be Abuses relating to the Stage; (which I think is too apparent) Let the Abuse be reformed, and not the use, for that Reason only, Abolish'd. 'Twas an Old saying when I was a Boy,

*Abfit Abusus non desit totaliter Vfus.*

I shall not run through Mr. Collier's Book; I will only touch a little on two or three general Notions, in which, I think he may be mistaken. What he urges out of the Primitive Councils, and Fathers of the Church, seems to me to be directed against the Heathen Plays, which were a sort of Religious Worship with them, to the Honour of *Ceres*, *Flora*, or some of their false Deities; they had always a little Altar on their Stages, as appears plain enough from some places in *Plautus*. And Mr. Collier himself p. 235. tells us out of *Livy*, that Plays were brought in upon the Score of



of Religion, to pacify the Gods. No wonder then, they forbid Christians to be present at them, for it was almost the same as to be present at their Sacrifices. We must also observe that this was in the Infancy of Christianity, when the Church was under severe, and almost continual Persecutions, and when all its true Members were of most strict and exemplary Lives; not knowing when they should be call'd to the Stake, or thrown to Wild-Beasts. They communicated Daily, and expected Death hourly; their thoughts were intent upon the next World, they abstain'd almost wholly from all Diversions and pleasures ( though lawfull and Innocent ) in this. Afterwards when Persecution ceased, and the Church flourish'd, Christians being then freed from their former Terrors, allow'd themselves, at proper times, the lawfull Recreations of Conversation, and among other ( no doubt ) this of Shewes and Representations. After this time, the Censures of the Church indeed, might be continued, or revived, upon occasion, against Plays and Players, tho' ( in my Opinion ) it can not be understood generally, but only against such Players who were of Vicious and Licentious Lives, and represented profane Subjects, inconsistent with the Morals and probity of Manners requisite to Christians; and frequented chiefly by such loose and Debauch'd People as were much more apt to Corrupt than Divert those who associated with them



them. I say, I can not think the Canons and Censures of the Fathers can be applyed to all Players, *quatenus* Players; for if so how could Plays be continued among the Christians, as they were, of Divine Subjects, and Scriptural Stories? A late French Author Speaking of the Original of the *Hotel De Bourgogne* (a Play-house in *Paris*) says that the ancient Dukes of that Name gave it to the Brotherhood of the Passion, established in the Church of Trinity-Hospital in the *Rue S. Denis*, on condition that they should represent here Interludes of Devotion: And adds that there have been publick Shews in this Place 600 Years ago. The Spanish and Portuguze continue still to have, for the most part, such Ecclesiastical Stories, for the Subject of their Plays: And if we may beleive Gage, they are Acted in their Churches in *Mexico*, and the Spanish *West-Indies*.

*Lovent.* That's a great way off, *Truman*; I had rather you would come nearer Home, and confine your discourse to *Old England*.

*Trum.* So I intend. The same has been done here in *England*; for otherwise how comes it to be prohibited in the 88th Canon, among those past in Convocation, 1603. Certain it is that our ancient Plays were of Religious Subjects, and had for their Actors, (if not Priests) yet Men relating to the Church.

*Lovent.* How does that appear?

*Trum.*

30 *Trans.* Nothing clearer. *Stow* in his Survey of London, has one Chapter of the Sports and Pastimes of old time used in this City, and there he tells us, That in the Year 1391 (which was 15 R. 2.) a Stage-Play was play'd by the Parish-Clerks of London, at the Skinner's well beside Smithfield, which Play continued three Days together, the King, Queen, and Nobles of the Realm being present. And another was play'd in the Year 1409 (11 H. 4.) which lasted eight Days, and was of Matter from the Creation of the World; whereat was present most part of the Nobility and Gentry of England. Sir William Dugdale in his Antiquities of Warwickshire, p. 116, speaking of the Gray Friars (or Franciscans) at Coventry, says, Before the suppression of the Monasteries, this City was very famous for the Pageants that were play'd therein upon Corpus-Christi Day; which Pageants being acted with mighty State and Reverence by the Friars of this House, had Theattes for the several Scenes very large and high, plac'd upon Wheels, and drawn to all the eminent Parts of the City, for the better advantage of the Spectators; and contain'd the Story of the New Testament, composed in old English Rhime. An ancient Manuscript of the same is now to be seen in the Cottonian Library, Sub Effig. Vespas. D. 8. Since the Reformation, in Queen Elizabeth's time, Plays were frequently acted by Quiristers and Singing Boys; and several of our old Comedies have printed in the  
 Title

Title Page, *Acted by the Children of Paul's*, (not the School, but the Church) others, *By the Children of her Majesty's Chappel*; in particular, *Cynthia's Revels*, and the *Postaster* were play'd by them; who were at that time famous for good Action. Among Ben. Johnson's Epigrams you may find An Epitaph on S. P. (Sal. Pavy) one of the Children of Queen Elizabeth's Chappel; part of which runs thus,

Tears he counted scarce Thirteen  
When Fates turn'd Cruel,  
— Ter three fill'd Lodicks he had been  
The Stages Jewell.  
— And did act (what now we moan),  
— Old Man so duly,  
As, yooth, the Parca thought him one,  
He play'd so truly.

Some of these Chappel Boys, when they grew Men, became Actors at the Black-friers; such were *Nathan Field*, and *John Underwood*. Now I can hardly imagine that such Plays and Players as these are included in the severe Censure of the Councils and Fathers; but such only who are truly within the Character given by *Didacus de Tapp*, cited by Mr Collier, p. 276, viz. *The infamous Playhouse*; a place of contradiction to the strictness and sobriety of Religion; a place hated by God, and hunted by the Devil. And for such I have as great an abhorrence as any Man.

Love

*Q. Lovem.* Can you guess of what Antiquity the representing of Religious Matters, on the Stage, hath been in England?

*A. Tum.* How long before the Conquest I know not, but that it was used in London not long after, appears by *Fitz-Stevens*, an Author who wrote in the Reign of King *Henry the Second*. His Words are, *Londonia pro spectaculis theatralibus, pro ludis scenicis, ludos habet sanctiores, Representationes miraculorum, quæ sancti Confessores operati sunt, seu Representationes passionum quibus claruit constantia Martyrum.* Of this, the Manuscript which I lately mention'd, in the *Cottonian Library*, is a notable instance. *Sir William Dugdale* cites this Manuscript, by the Title of *Ludus Coventriae*; but in the printed Catalogue of that Library, p. 113, it is named thus, *A Collection of Plays in old English Metre. h. e. Dramata sacra in quibus exhibentur historie veteris & N. Testamenti, introductis quasi in Scenam personis illic memoratis, quas secum invicem colloquentes pro ingenio fingit Poeta. Videntur olim coram populo, sive ad instruendum sive ad placendum, a fratibus mendicantibus representata.* It appears by the latter end of the Prologue, that these Plays or Interludes, were not only play'd at *Coventry*, but in other Towns and Places upon occasion. And possibly this may be the same Play which *Stow* tells us was play'd in the Reign of King *Henry IV*, which lasted for Eight Days. The Book seems by the Character and Language to be at least 300 Years old



old. It begins with a general Prologue, giving the Arguments of 40 Pageants or Gesticulations (which were as so many several Acts or Scenes) representing all the Histories of both Testaments from the Creation, to the choosing of St. *Mathias* to be an Apostle. The Stories of the New Testament are more largely exprest, viz. The Annunciation, Nativity, Visitation; but more especially all Matters relating to the Passion very particularly, the Resurrection, Ascension, the choice of St. *Mathias*: After which is also represented the Assumption, and last Judgment. All these things were treated of in a very homely Style, (as we now think) infinitely below the Dignity of the Subject: But it seems the Gust of that Age was not so nice and delicate in these Matters; the plain and incurious Judgment of our Ancestors, being prepared with favour, and taking every thing by the right and easiest Handle: For example, in the Scene relating to the Visitation.

*Maria*

"But Husband of oo thing pray you most meely,  
we knowing that our Colye Chamberlaine child is,  
it is please you to go to her meely,  
that we myght comfort her it ever to me blys.

*Joseph.*

I take, in the with child, I see  
I her husband Zachary be merry.



In Montana they dwelle, for hence, so mory the,  
 In the City of Iuda, I know it verily;  
 It is hence I treowe myles two a fyre,  
 All as like to be wepy or we come at the same.  
 I wole with a good will, blessed wyff Mary;  
 Now go we forth then in goddys name, &c.

### A little before the Resurrection.

*Nunc dormient milites, & veniet anima Christi de  
 inferno, cum Adam & Eva, Abraham, John  
 Baptist, & alijs.*

#### *Anima Christi.*

Come forth Adam, and Eve with the,  
 And all my frendes that herein be,  
 In Paradyse come forth with me  
 In blyss to dwelle.

The fende of hell that is yator too  
 He shall be wrappyd and woundyn in woo:  
 Fro wo to welth now shall ye go,  
 With myrth ever mor to melle.

#### *Adam.*

I thank the Lord of the grete grace  
 That now is forgiven my gret trespass,  
 Now shall we dwell yn in blyssfull pace, &c.

The last Scene or Pageant, which represents  
 the Day of Judgment, begins thus.

#### *Michael.*

Surgite, All men aryse,  
 Venite ad iudicium,  
 For now is set the High Justice:  
 And hath assayed the day of Dome:

Heere you redely to this grett assise,  
 Both grett and small, all and sum,  
 And of your answer you now advise,  
 What you shall say when that you com, &c.

These and such like, were the Plays which in  
 former Ages were presented publickly: Whe-  
 ther they had any settled and constant Houses, for  
 that purpose, does not appear; I suppose not. But  
 it is notorious, that in former times there was  
 hardly ever any Solemn Reception of Princes,  
 or Noble Persons, but Pageants (that is Stages  
 Erected in the open Street) were part of the  
 Entertainment. On which there were Speeches  
 by one or more Persons, in the nature of Scenes;  
 and before one of the Speakers must be some  
 Saint of the same Name with the Party to whom  
 the Honour is intended. For instance, there  
 is an ancient Manuscript at *Coventry*, call'd  
 the *Old Leet Book*, wherein is set down in a  
 very particular manner, (fo. 168) the Re-  
 ception of Queen *Margaret*, Wife of *H. 6.*  
 who came to *Coventry* (and I think, with  
 her, her young Son *Prince Edward*) on the  
 Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy-Cross, 35.  
*H. 6.* (1456) Many Pageants and Speeches were  
 made for her Welcome; out of all which,  
 I shall observe but two or three, in the Old  
 English, as it is Recorded.

*St. Edward.*

God of mekenes, Dame Margarete, princes most excellent  
I King Edward wellcome you with affection cordial,  
Certesying to your highnes mekely men entent,  
For the wele of the King and you hertily pray I shall,  
And for prince Edward my gostly chylde, who I love principal,  
Praying the, John Euangelist, my help therein to be,  
On that condition right humble I giue this Ring to the.

*John Euangelist.*

Holy Edward crowned King, Brothet in Vergencyt,  
By power plainly I will prefer thy will to amplest,  
Most excellent princes of wyemen mortal, your Bedeman will I be.  
I know your Life so vertuous that God is pleased thereby  
The birth of you unto this Reme shall cause great Melody:  
The vertuous voice of Prince Edward shall daily well encrease,  
St. Edward his Godfader and I shall prey therefore doubteless.

*St. Margaret.*

Most notabul Princes of wyemen earthly  
Dame Margarete, the chefe myrth of this Emppre,  
Ye be hertely welcome to this Cyte.  
To the pleasure of your highnesst I will set my desyre;  
Both nature and gentlenesse dorch we require,  
Seth we be both of one name, to shew you kindnesse;  
Wherfore by my power ye shall haue no distresse.

I shall pray to the Prince that is endlesse  
To socour you with solas of his high grace;  
He will heere my petition this is doubteless,  
For I wroughte all my life that his will mace.  
Therefore, Lady, when you be in any dredfull case,  
Call on me boldly, thereof I pray you,  
And trust in me sepythully, I will do that may pay you.

In the next Reign (as appears in the same  
Book, fo. 22) an other Prince Edward, Son  
of

of King *Edward* the 4, came to *Coventry* on the 28 of *April*, 14 E. 4, (1474) and was entertained with many Pageants and Speeches, among which I shall observe only two; one was of *St. Edward* again, who was then made to speak thus,

Noble Prince *Edward*, my Cousin and my Knight,  
And very Prince of our Line com ye dissent,  
I Saint *Edward* have pursued for your fathers imperial Right,  
Whereof he was excluded by full furious intent.  
Were this your Chamber as Prince full excellent  
He be right welcome. Thanked be Cris of his sound,  
For that that was ours is now in your fathers hand.

The other Speech was from *St. George*; and thus saith the Book.

— Also upon the Conditte in the Troscheping was *St. George* armed, and a kings daughter kneeling afore him with a Lamb, and the father and the mother being in a Towre aboven beholding *St. George* saving their daughter from the Dragon, and the Conditte renning wine in four places, and *Pintralep* of *Digan* playing, and *St. George* having this Speech underwritten.

O mighty God our all succour celestiall  
Which this Royne hath given in power  
To us, mother, and to me *George* protection personall  
To defend from enemyes her and mine,  
And as this mayden wounded was here  
By the grace from this Dragon debar,  
So, Lord preserve this noble prince, and ever be his succour.

*Lover*. I perceive these holy Matters consisted very much of Praying; but I pray for *St. Edward* the Confessor, who in the compass of a few



few Years, was made to promise his favour and assistance to two young Princes of the same Name indeed, but of as different and opposite Interests as the two Poles. I know not how he could perform to both.

*Trump.* Alas! they were both unhappy, notwithstanding these fine Shews and seeming caresses of Fortune, being both murder'd, one by the Hand, the other by the procurement of *Rich. Duke of Gloucester*. I will produce but one Example more of this sort of Action, or Representations, and that is of later time, and an Instance of much higher Nature than any yet mentioned, It was at the marriage of Prince *Arthur*, eldest Son of King *Henry 7.* to the Princess *Catherine of Spain*, *An. 1501.* Her passage through *London* was very magnificent, as I have read it described in an old *M. S. Chronicle* of that time. The Pageants and Speeches were many; the Persons represented *St. Catherine*, *St. Ursula*, a Senator, Noblesse, Virtue, an Angel, King *Alphonse*, *Job*, *Boetius*, &c. among others one is thus described, ——— When this Speech was ended, she held on her way till she cam unto the Standard in Chepe, where was ordeyned the next Pageant made like an hebyn, theyn sytting a personage representing the father of hebyn, beynge all fornyd of Gold, and beynnyng bestor his throne vbi Candyllis of war standyng in vbi Candyllis of Gold, the said personage beynge embrocated with sundry Syarchles of Amellis, and sytting in a Cope of most rich cloth of sylu, garnishyd weth foon and perle in most sumptuous wyse. Foragaim which said



said Dagend upon the south syde of the strete  
 stood at that tyme, in a howse wheryn that tyme  
 dwelled William Geffrey habyrdasher, the king,  
 the Quene, my Lady the Kingys moder, my  
 Lord of Oxyngford, wyth many other Lordys and  
 Ladys, and Berys of this Realme, wyth also  
 certayn Ambassadors of France lately sent from  
 the French King: and so passing the said Estates,  
 eyther gowyng to other due and conuenient Sa-  
 lute and Countenances, so sone as hyr grace was  
 approchid unto the said Dagend, the lady be-  
 gan his Spech as foloweth.

*Hanc veneram locum, septeno lumine septum.  
 Dignumque Arthuri totidem Astra mirant.*

I am begynnyng and ende, that made ech creature  
 By selfe, and for my selfe, but man especially  
 Both male and female, made after myne own figure,  
 Whom I joined togeder in Parriamony  
 And that in Paradyse, declaring openly  
 That men shall weddyng in my Chyrch solempnize,  
 Figurid and signified by the erthly Paradyse.

In this my Chyrch I am alway resident  
 As my chyrch tabernacle, and most chastyt place,  
 Among these golden Candlestykis which represent  
 My Cathayr Chyrch, shynyng after my face,  
 With lyght of feyth, wisdom, vergetee, and grace,  
 And mercifully the ransomed soweth me  
 With the springing of the eye of Charity.

Wherefore my welbelovid doctogher Cathayr,  
 Byth I have made you to myne own semblance  
 In my Chyrch to be married, and your noble Children  
 To regn in this land as in the empyrance,  
 So that ye have me in speciall remembrance:  
 Lete me and my Chyrch your spiritual water,  
 For ye dispelling that con, dyspse that other.

Look

Look that ye walk in my precepts, and obey them well:  
 And here I give you the same blessing that I  
 Give my well beloved chylde of Israell;  
 Blessed be the fruite of your belly;  
 Howee substance and frutes I shall encrease and multiply;  
 Howee rebellious Enemies I shall put in your hand,  
 Encreasing in honour both you and your land.

*Lovew.* This would be censured now a days  
 as profane to the highest degree.

*Trum.* No doubt on't: Yet you see there  
 was a time when People were not so nicely  
 censorious in these Matters, but were willing to  
 take things in the best sence; and then this  
 was thought a noble Entertainment for the  
 greatest King in *Europe* (such I esteem King *H.*  
*7.* at that time) and proper for that Day of  
 mighty Joy and Triumph. And I must farther  
 observe out of the Lord *Bacon's* History of *H. 7.*  
 that the chief Man who had the care of that  
 Days Proceedings was Bishop *Fox*, a grave Coun-  
 celor for War or Peace, and also a good Surveyor  
 of Works, and a good Master of Cerimonies.  
 and it seems he approv'd it. The said Lord  
*Bacon* tells us farther, That whosoever had  
 those Toys in compiling, they were not altoge-  
 ther Pedantical.

*Lovew.* These things however are far from  
 that which we understand by the name of a  
 Play.

*Trum.* It may be so; but these were the Plays  
 of those times. Afterwards in the Reign of *K.*  
*H. 8.* both the Subject and Form of these Plays  
 began to alter, and have since varied more and

E

more

more. I have by me, a thing called *A merry Play betwene the Pardoner and the Frere, the Curate and Neybour Pratte*. Printed the 5 of April 1533. which was 24 H. 8. (a few Years before the Dissolution of Monasteries) The design of this Play was to redicule Friers and Pardoners. Of which I'll give you a taste. To begin it, the Fryer enters with these Words,

Deus hic; the holy Triparte  
 Bieserue all that now here be.  
 Dere bretherne, of ye wyl consyder.  
 The Cause why I am com hyder;  
 He wolde be glad to knowe my entent;  
 For I com not hyther for money nor for rent,  
 I com not hyther for meat nor for meate,  
 But I com hyther for your Soules heale, &c.

After a long Preamble, he adresses himself to Preach, when the Pardoner enters with these Words,

God and St. Leonarde send ye all his grace  
 As many as ben assembled in this place, &c.

And makes a long Speech, shewing his Bulls and his Reliques, in order to sell his Pardons for the raising some Money towards the rebuilding,

Of the holy Chappell of Sweet Saynt Leonarde  
 Which late by fyre was destroyed and marde.

Both these speaking together, with continual interruption, at last they fall together by the Ears. Here the Curate enters (for you must know the Scene lies in the Church)

Hold

Hold your hands; a vengeance on ye both two  
That euer ye came hether to make this ado,  
To polure my Chyrche, &c.

Fri. Master Parson, I marvaill ye will giue Lychence  
To this false knaue in this Audiance  
To publish his ragman rolles with lyes.  
I despyred hym gyves more than ones or twyse  
To hold hys peas tyll that I had done,  
But he wolde here no more than the man in the mone.

Pard. Why sholde I suffice the more than thou me?  
Master parson gaue me lychence before the.  
And I wolde thou knowest it I haue relikes here.  
Other maner stuffe than thou dost bere:  
I wyll edely more with the syght of it,  
Than will all thy prayenge of holy wyrt;  
For that except that the precher himselte lye well  
His predycacyon wyll helpe never a dell, &c.

Parl. No more of this wranglyng in my Chyrch:  
I threwe your hertys bothe for this lurch.  
Is there any blood shed here between these knaues?  
Thanked be god they had no staups,  
Nor egoteles, for then it had ben wronge.  
Well, ye shall syng another songe.

Here he calls his Neighbour *Prat* the Constable, with design to apprehend 'em, and set 'em in the Stocks. But the Frier and Pardoner prove sturdy, and will not be stockt, but fall upon the poor Parson and Constable, and bang 'em both so well-favour'dly, that at last they are glad to let 'em go at liberty: And so the Farce ends with a drawn Battail. Such as this were the Plays of that Age, acted in Gentle-



mens Halls at Christmase, or such like festival times, by the Servants of the

\* Till the 25 Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, the Queen had not any Players; but in that Year 12 of the best of all those who belonged to several Lords, where chosen & sworn her Servants, as Grooms of the Chamber. *Stow's Annals*, p. 698.

Family, or Strowlers who went about and made it a Trade. It is not unlikely that \* Lords in those days, and Persons of eminent Quality, had their several Gangs of Players, as some have now of Fiddlers, to whom they give Cloaks and Badges. The first Comedy that I have seen

that looks like regular, is *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, writ I think in the reign of King *Edward 6*. This is composed of five Acts, the Scenes unbroken, and the unities of Time and Place duly observed. It was acted at *Christ Colledge* in *Cambridge*; there not being as yet any settled and publick Theaters.

*Lovew.* I observe, *Truman*, from what you have said, that Plays in *England* had a beginning much like those of *Greece*, the Monologues and the Pageants drawn from place to place on Wheels, answer exactly to the Cart of *Thespia*, and the Improvements have been by such little steps and degrees as among the Ancients, till at last, to use the Words of Sir *George Buck* (in his *Third University of England*) *Dramatick Poesy* is so lively exprest and represented upon the publick Stages and Theatres of this City, as *Rome* in the Auge (the highest pitch) of her Pomp and Glory, never saw it better perform'd, I mean (says he) in respect

respect of the Action and Art, and not of the Cost and Sumptuousness. This he writ about the Year 1631. But can you inform me *Truman*, when publick Theaters were first erected for this purpose in London?

*Trum.* Not certainly; but I presume about the beginning of Queen *Elizabeths* Reign. For *Stow* in his Survey of London (which Book was first printed in the Year 1598) says, *Of late Years in place of these Stage-plays (i.e. those of Religious Matters) have been used Comedies, Tragedies, Interludes, and Histories, both true and feigned; for the acting whereof certain publick Places, as the Theatre, the Curtine, &c. have been erected.* And the continuator of *Stows* Annals, p.1004, says, That in Sixty Years before the publication of that Book (which was *An. Dom.* 1629) no less than 17 publick Stages, or common Playhouses, had been built in and about London. In which number he reckons five Inns or Common Osteries, to have been in his time turned into Playhouses, one Cock-pit, *St. Paul's* singing School, one in the *Blackfriars*, one in the *Whitefriars*, and one in former time at *Newington Butts*; and adds, before the space of 60 Years past, I never knew, heard, or read, of any such Theaters, set Stages, or Playhouses, as have been purposefully built within Man's Memory.

*Lovew.* After all, I have been told, that Stage-Plays are inconsistent with the Laws of this Kingdom, and Players made Rogues by Statute.

*Trum.*

*Tram.* He that told you so strain'd a point of Truth: I never met with any Law wholly to suppress them: Sometimes indeed they have been prohibited for a Season; as in times of *Lent*, general Mourning or publick Calamities, or upon other occasions, when the Government saw fit. Thus by Proclamation, 7 of *April*, in the first Year of Queen *Elizabeth*, Plays and Interludes were forbid till *Alhallow-tide* next following. *Hollinsbed*, p. 1184. Some Statutes have been made for their Regulation or Reformation, not general suppression. By the Stat. 39 *Elix.* c. 4. (which was made for the suppressing of Rogues, Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars) it is enacted, S. 2, That all persons that be, or utter themselves to be, Doctors, Procurers, Patient gatherers, or Collectors for Soals, Bishops or Hospitals, or Fencers, Barkeepers, common players of Interludes and Minstrels, wandering abroad, (other than Players of Interludes belonging to any Baron of this Realm, or any other honourable Personage of greater Degree, to be authorized to play under the Band and Seal of Arms of such Baron or Personage) All Juglers, Tinkers, Pedlers and Petty chapmen, wandering abroad, all wandering Persons, capable in Body, using loytering, and refusing to work for such reasonable Wages as is commonly given, &c. These shall be adjudged and deemed Rogues, Vagabonds and sturdy Beggars, and punished as such.

*Loven.* But this privilege of Authorising or Licensing, is taken away by the Stat. 1 *Jas.* 1. ch. 7. S. 1. and therefore all of them (as Mr. Collier

lier says) are without distinction brought under the foresaid Penalty.

*Trum.* If he means all Players without distinction, 'tis a great Mistake. For the 29<sup>th</sup> of the Queens Statute extends only to *Wandering Players* and not to such as are the King or Queen's Servants, and establisht in settled Houses by Royal Authority. On such, the ill Character of vagrant Players (or as they are now called, Strolers) can cast no more aspersions, than the wandering Proctors, in the same Statute mentioned, on those of *Doctors-Commons*. By a Stat. made 3. *Ja.* 1. ch. 21. It was enacted, That if any person shall in any Stage-play, Enterlude, Shew, Maygame or Pageant, jestingly or prophanely speak or use the holy name of God, Christ Jesus, the holy Ghost, or of the Trinity, he shall forfeit for every such offence, 10 l. The Stat. 1. *Char.* 1. ch. 1. enacts, That no Meetings, Assemblies, or concourse of People shall be out of their own Parishes, on the Lords day, for any Sports or Pastimes whatsoever, nor any Bear-bating, Bull bating, Enterludes, Common Plays, or other unlawful Exercises and Pastimes used by any person or persons within their own Parishes. These are all the Statutes that I can think of relating to the Stage and Players; but nothing to suppress them totally, till the two Ordinances of the Long Parliament, one of the 22 of *October* 1647, the other of the 11 of *Feb.* 1647. By which all Stage-Plays and Interludes are absolutely forbid; the Stages, Seats, Galleries, &c. to be pulled down; all Players tho' calling themselves the King or Queens



Queens servants, and as such Acting within  
 this Realm, all of them on Conviction, to be  
 punished and fined according to Law; the  
 money forfeited by them to go to the Poor of  
 the Parish; and every Spectator to Pay 5s. to  
 the use of the Poor. Also Cock-fighting was  
 prohibited by one of *Oliver's* Acts of 31 Mar.  
 1654. But I suppose no body pretends these  
 things to be *Laws*; I could say more on this  
 Subject, but I must break off here, and leave  
 you, *Lovers*; my Occasions require it.

*Love.* Farewel, Old Cavalier.

*Trum.* 'Tis properly said; we are almost all  
 of us, now, gone and forgotten.

**F I N I S**